

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, and 22-42 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, and 22-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 4,760,606 to Lesnick et al. (herein “Lesnick”) in view of U.S. patent 5,666,490 to Gillings et al. (herein “Gillings”) and further in view of the Microsoft Publication “Getting Results with Microsoft Office 97”, 1997, pp. 376-381 (herein “Microsoft Office”). That rejection is traversed by the present response as discussed next.

Initially applicant notes each of the independent claims is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. The independent claims now clarify a network system including a plurality of “client devices” connected to a network. That amendment clarifies differences between the devices connected on a network and users also able to use the network, which users for example may have file folders on the network. Such claim features are supported by the original specification, for example Figure 9 in the specification shows different client devices 2 connected to a network. Figure 9 also shows an image information inputting apparatus 1b connected to an image information server 1a. As discussed in further detail below, one feature in the claims as currently written believed to distinguish over the applied art is that a scanner, i.e., the image information inputting apparatus 1b, can input information to a storing server, i.e., the image information server 1a, not through the client devices 2.

Figure 6 in the present specification also shows different user names that can be stored in a group name table to different groups G1-G3. In that respect each of the independent claims now also more clearly recites a positive element of a “group name table”, although that feature was previously recited in the claims, but has now been even further clarified as a distinct element.

The claims as written are believed to positively recite features that clearly distinguish over the applied art.

First, applicants note independent claim 1 recites “a scanner having a document feeder connected to the image information storing server, ***not through the client devices***” (emphasis added). The other independent claims recite a similar feature. That feature is believed to distinguish over the applied art in a way that has not been fully considered in the Office Action.

With respect to the above-noted feature the outstanding Office Action indicates Lesnick discloses the automatic digitation of documents, and not through the users, as was previously recited in the claims.¹

The outstanding Office Action also appears to have interpreted the previously recited term “users” as being operators of the devices, rather than the now recited “client devices”. In that respect, in maintaining the rejection the outstanding Office Action states:

7. Applicant’s arguments filed 7/30/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicant states that Lesnick does not teach a scanner with a document feeder connected to the server, not through the users (pages 18, last para.-20). The Examiner disagrees, since Lesnick discloses the automatic – not through users-- digitization of documents ... The users are not involved in the scanning of the documents. It is not through the users that the scanning is performed.²

In reply to that basis for the rejection, applicant first reiterates the claims are amended by the present response to clarify the scanner can be connected to the image information storing device not through the *client devices*. Again with reference to Figure 9 in the present specification as a non-limiting example, different client devices 2 are connected to an image information server 1a, but a separate scanner, i.e., image information inputting apparatus 1b, is also connected to the image information server 1a not through the client devices 2. In the

¹ Office Action of October 12, 2007, page 4, line 7 et seq.

² Office Action of October 12, 2007, page 9, first paragraph.

claims, the scanner is connected to an image information storing server not through client devices. Such a feature provides an advantage that each client device does not need to have a scanner, and thus the system can be made compact, which is beneficial in the current business office. Lesnick is not believed to disclose or suggest such features.

In the various figures in Lesnick the scanner is always connected to a computer, scanned data is input to the computer, and such a computer would correspond to the claimed “client devices”. For example in Figure 2 in Lesnick the OCR device 205 is connected to the computer 202, and similarly in Figures 3 and 4 a scanning operation through a scanner takes place through a centralized computer or client device. The claims as written recite a different feature, which has now even been further clarified in the claims by the presently submitted amendments.

In such ways, applicants respectfully submit the above-noted features clarified in the claims clearly distinguish over Lesnick, which was cited for the above-noted features. No other prior art is also believed to cure the above-noted deficiencies in Lesnick, and thus for the above-noted reasons alone the outstanding rejection is traversed.

Moreover, the claims as written are believed to recite even further limitations neither taught nor suggested by the applied art.

Independent claim 1 specifically recites a group name table storing registered group names and corresponding user names for each respective group name, and the image information server “configured to store (1) the group name table and (2) image data in various folders to be read by the plurality of users”. Independent claim 1 further recites

wherein when the first sheet of format image data indicates a group name previously registered in the group name table, a controller determines if the group name is registered by retrieving the group name table, and if the group name is registered in the group name table, the image information server stores the sheet image data in an applicable folder or file of each registered user corresponding to the group name[.]

The other independent claims recite similar features. Such features are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

With respect to the above-noted features the outstanding Office Action appears to cite the Microsoft Office reference, specifically stating “Office teaches creating a personal distribution list, containing the names of every one in the distribution group (page 380)”.³

In reply to that basis for the outstanding rejection, applicant notes the Microsoft Office system does not disclose or suggest the claimed features and thus does not cure the deficiencies of Lesnick in view of Gillings. Specifically, the Microsoft Office system merely discloses providing distribution lists for e-mail messages. In the Microsoft Office system the user must select to which distribution list to send data.

In contrast to the operation in the Microsoft Office, in the claims a specific “first sheet of format image data indicates a group name”, the “controller determines if the group name is previously registered in the group name table”, if the group name is registered “by retrieving the group name table”, then “the image information server stores the document image data in an applicable folder or file of each registered user corresponding to the group name”. That is, in the claims a determination is made as to whether a specific document includes a group name previously registered in a group name table, and if the group name is registered by retrieving the group name table. The Microsoft Office has no even similar operation. In the Microsoft Office a user must set up a personal distribution list. Microsoft Office does not have any operation to automatically indicate whether any distribution list is registered, or much less whether any document or input includes a group name.

Applicant further submits even the noted distribution lists in the Microsoft Office system are always stored in a client, and are generally used by the same client when mailing and storing senders’ comments in a prescribed folder or a file of a recipient in a mail server.

³ Office Action of October 12, 2007, middle of page 5.

In contrast to the operation in the Microsoft Office system, in the claims the group name table is registered in the image information storing server, not in the client, and is then used, i.e. retrieved, from that same server to confirm if the group name read from the sheet exists in the group name table. The Microsoft Office system does not disclose any type of operation.

Thereby, Microsoft Office does not disclose or suggest reading a group name and determining if a group name is previously registered in a group name table, and if registered, by retrieving the group name table, then sending data to each user in the group distribution list. Instead in the Microsoft Office a user must input names to be added to a group name, but no determination at all is made as to whether any input includes a group name.

In such ways, the Microsoft Office disclosure is not at all related to the claimed features, and even if combined with the teachings in Lesnick and Gillings the above-noted claim features would not have been realized.

For such reasons, the claims clearly distinguish over the applied art.

Moreover, applicant respectfully submits the disclosure in the Microsoft Office is not properly applicable to the teachings of Lesnick and Gillings with respect to the claimed features.

The claims are directed to an image scanning technology. In contrast the Microsoft Office employs a typical computer network technology with a keyboard, a dialog box, a program, etc. In the Microsoft Office system a group address is associated with user addresses only utilizing a keyboard of a PC.

In contrast to such systems in the Microsoft Office, the claims recite a format sheet being read by a scanner, as clearly recited in each of the claims. Thus, in the claims a group name inputting is executed at a different device and accordingly at a different place than in a Microsoft Office. In the claims the group name inputting is executed at a scanner. In the

Microsoft Office the only group name inputting is at a PC. The Microsoft Office requires the use of keyboard to even make such an entry.

In the Microsoft Office system the user must walk to a PC and input a group name or the like using a keyboard after scanning an image with a scanner, and thereby inputting such a group name or user name becomes a more time consuming and difficult operation.

Such disclosures in the Microsoft Office have no relevance whatsoever to Lesnick or Gillings beyond noting that a distribution list can be made for an e-mail. As discussed above in detail, the claims are not directed to a user setting up an e-mail for a distribution.

In maintaining the grounds for rejection the outstanding Office Action addresses the above-noted comments, which are also presented in the previous response.

One basis for maintaining the rejection now states

Gillings teaches distributing documents based on workgroup names used to index the documents (col. 6, line 46 – col. 7, line 16). Office teaches creating a personal distribution list, containing the names of everyone in the distribution group (page 380). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use group names in the barcode taught by Lesnick, together with the teachings of retrieving the work group names as taught by Gillings, and group name table storing the names as taught by Office, because Gillings teaches overcoming the inefficiency of letting only one user at a time to access case reports (col. 1, lines 52 – col. 2, line 3), and for all the reasons found in Office, including making it easy to send documents to users in a certain group of people (page 380).⁴

In reply to the above-noted statements in the rejection, applicant first notes Gillings discloses “[w]orkflow queues are used for distributing work to users and for selecting workflow items requiring an action . . . Each workflow queue is assigned to a specific

⁴ Office Action of October 12, 2007, the sentence bridging pages 9 and 10.

workgroup. Only users in the assigned work group can access items in a given work flow queue.”⁵

Thereby, Gillings does not correspond to the claimed features in that Gillings does not disclose or suggest storing image information into an applicable folder or file of each of registered users corresponding to a group name. Instead Gillings discloses the use of “workflow queues” and not the “groups” shown for example in Gillings at column 5, line 65-68.

Further, the Microsoft Office document only discloses the use of a personal distribution list, which again a user creates. The Microsoft Office system is also not even directed to an image scanning technology but instead merely to distributing e-mail messages. The claims are not directed to such features.

The Office Action also maintains in the rejection the art is analogous by stating:

In this case Office discloses the use of a distribution list for distributing data to the members included in the list. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use group name tables storing the user names as taught by Office, for distributing the digitized documents to users found in the distribution list, because of all the reasons found in Office including making it easy to send, and target documents to users in a certain group of people (page 380).⁶

The above-noted grounds for combining the reference appears to be based on the position that the Microsoft Office document is directed to distributing documents to different users. However, applicant notes the Microsoft Office document is directed to an e-mail system in which a user can individually send e-mails. Neither of Lesnick nor Gillings is directed to such a system. The field of endeavor for the Microsoft Office document is clearly e-mail communication initiated by a user, and the field of endeavor of Gillings is an

⁵ Gillings specifically at column 6, line 65 to column 7, line 4.

⁶ Office Action of October 12, 2007, page 10, first full paragraph.

electronic document management system, and the field of endeavor of Lesnick is an electronic imaging file processing system. The e-mail distribution as in the Microsoft Office is not directed to distributing scanned documents and electronic document management.

Thereby, for such further reasons the claims as written are believed to clearly distinguish over Lesnick in view of Gillings and Microsoft Office.

In view of the present response applicant respectfully submits the claims as written are allowable over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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